

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02206 111118Z

43

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2206

USIS FOR IBS/RHINE AND IWE/HELGERSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS GR

SUBJ: GREEK GOVERNMENT CONCERNED BY VOA BROADCAST OF
ZIGDIS STATEMENT BEFORE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. SUMMARY. GREEK MFA OFFICIAL CALLED IN CHARGE
APRIL 10 AT PRIME MINISTER'S INSTRUCTION TO EXPRESS
CONCERN AT VOA BROADCAST OF STATEMENT CRITIZING GOG MADE
BY OPPOSITION FIGURE ZIGDIS BEFORE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON MARCH 27. BROADCAST WAS CHARACTERIZED AS
UNFRIENDLY AND HELPFUL TO COMMUNISTS AND OFFICIAL SAID ACT COULD
BE PREJUCICIAL TO US FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS IN GREECE.
CHARGE REMINDED MINISTRY OFFICIAL OF FREE PRESS AND POLITICAL
DISCUSSION IN US AND SAID CENSORSHIP OF US NEWS BY
VOA WAS OUT OF QUESTION. MINISTRY OFFICIAL IMPLIED
GREEK CONCERN STEMMED FROM SENSITIVITY OF GREEK
MILITARY TO FOREIGN CRITICISM. END SUMMARY.

2. MIGLIARESSIS, DIRECTOR THIRD DIRECTION (WE AND
AMERICAS), ASKED CHARGE TO CALL AT MFA APRIL 10 TO
DISCUSS VOA BROADCAST MARCH 28 OF STATEMENT BY
JOHN ZIGIDS, FORMER CU MINISTER, BEFORE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS MARCH 27. UNDER INSTRUCTIONS
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 02206 111118Z

MIGLIARESSIS SAID PRIME MINISTER WAS EMBARRASEED THAT

VOA WHICH ENJOYED USE OF FACILITIES IN GREECE AND WHICH HAD ALWAYS BEEN REGARDED BY GREEKS AS VOICE OF FREEDOM AGAINST THE COMMUNIST THREAT WOULD VOICE A VICIOUS ATTACK ON A FRIENDLY AND ALLIED GOVERNMENT THEREBY AIDING THE COMMUNIST CAUSE. THE PRIME MINISTER HOPED THE US GOVERNMENT WOULD RECONSIDER ITS POLICY OF BROADCASTING SUCH DECLARATIONS. MIGLIARESSIS RHETORICALLY ASKED IF THE USG THOUGHT IT WOULD RECEIVE MILITARY FACILITIES IN GREECE SUCH AS HOMEPORTING IF THE COMMUNISTS WERE IN POWER AND WHETHER OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD TOLERATE SUCH ACTION. IF SO, PERHAPS THE US SHOULD PUT ITS VOA INSTALLATIONS THERE INSTEAD OF GREECE.

3. CHARGE REPLIED VOA WAS SIMPLY BROADCASTING THE NEWS NOT STATING A POLICY IN THIS CASE. HE POINTED OUT THAT MIGLIARESSIS, HAVING SERVED IN THE US AND WESTERN EUROPE, MUST BE WELL AWARE THAT US HAD A FREE PRESS AND OPEN DISCUSSION IN CONGRESS AND THAT IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR THE VOA TO CENSOR NEWS IN THE US, ESPECIALLY CONGRESSIONAL NEWS, IN DEFERENCE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL FEELINGS OUTSIDE US. CHARGE ALSO ASKED WHY GOG, IF IT CONSIDERED OLD POLITICIANS PASSE' MADE SUCH A FUSS OVER ZIGDIS STATEMENT. USG RECEIVED MUCH HARDER CRITICISM FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE US. FINALLY, HE ASKED WHETHER GOG CONCERN HAD BEEN PROMPTD BY PUBLIC REACTION TO VOA BROADCAST.

4. MIGLIARESSIS ADMITTED THAT GOG WAS AWARE OF BROADCAST BECAUSE IT REGULARLY MONITORED VOA, BBC AND DEUTSCHE WELLE. HE SAID HE WELL UNDERSTOOD US HAD FREE PRESS AND POLITICAL PROCESS BUT IT WAS UP TO EXECUTIVE BRANCH WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN POLICY TO POINT OUT TO CONGRESS THAT INVITING NATIONALS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY TO ATTACK THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT COULD PREJUDICE US INTERESTS IN THAT COUNTRY. HE ADDED THAT THE GREEK ARMED FORCES WERE VERY SENSITIVE TO SUCH OCCURRENCES, CONSIDERING THAT THE NATIONAL HONOR WAS AFFRONTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 02206 111118Z

5. COMMENT. MIGLIARESSIS WAS INSTRUCTED TO DO A JOB AND HE DID IT. HIS REFERENCE TO THE SENSITIVITY OF THE GREEK MILITARY REVEALED THE PROBABLE ORIGIN OF HIS INSTRUCTIONS. AS REPORTED ATHENS AIRGRAM-101 EDITORIALS HAVE NOW APPEARED IN AKROPOLIS AND ELEFTHEROS COSMOS VIOLENTLY ATTACKING ZIGIDS. BRANDIN

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